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ABSTRACT

The news media are often the main source of public information about education. This paper analyzes press coverage of selected issues in contemporary Australian education. From December 28, 1998, to February 17, 1999, daily educational reporting was surveyed in "The Australian" (a paper roughly equivalent to "USA Today") and in 18 state-based newspapers, including 12 dailies published in major cities, 2 small-town newspapers, and 2 less frequent publications from Aboriginal communities. During the period, 295 articles on education were reviewed, including 158 on private and public pre-K-12 education, 102 on higher education, and 35 on other education-related topics. Following a review of recent trends in Australian education, this paper discusses press coverage of controversial issues and other educational topics. These include: (1) government funding of private schools and related questions about the function and quality of public versus private education; (2) wide variation among states in the availability and quality of preschool education; (3) shortage of secondary school teachers, particularly mathematics teachers; (4) discipline problems and conflict resolution in schools; (5) a government plan to reduce welfare benefits to unemployed youth who fail literacy and numeracy tests; (6) assessment issues and the higher achievement of girls than boys; (7) reduced government funding for Aboriginal education and bilingual education; and (8) international educational competition and the development of offshore programs by Australian universities. (Contains 65 references.) (SV)

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The Australian Press and Education
A Survey of National and Global Perspectives

by

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of the
Comparative and International Education Society
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Introduction

The mission of most schools includes learning, socialization and transmission of civic and cultural values. As institutions within society schools strive, on the one hand, to maintain a favorable public understanding of their role and function. However, in democratic countries schools are subject to critical scrutiny by the news media which, as often as not, is the main source of public information about education. In this respect the media may play a key role in recording the direction of educational change, calling attention to crises and problems in schools and informing the public about the economic, political and social issues that affect education. In their interpretation of events broadcast and print media may reflect a wide range of views in the political spectrum from far left to far right. As such the media become part of the dialectical conflicts within society that continuously shape and change educational policy.

This paper analyzes press coverage of selected issues in curriculum and school reform in contemporary Australian education. National and state newspapers were used to explore editorial, popular and professional commentary on education. The focus of the study includes conflicts on reform issues, internal political considerations underlying the coverage and Australian reflections on the local and global contexts of the changes affecting their school system. Conclusions will assess the objectivity and influence of Australian news media and the interplay between local, national and global information about education.

The period of the study was December 28, 1998 to February 17, 1999 which spans a time of recess and school reopening in the Australian school calendar. Daily educational reporting was surveyed in 18 state-based newspapers and in *The Australian*, a paper roughly equivalent to *USA Today* (See Appendix A). Twelve dailies were published in major cities and towns with wide circulation in their respective states or territory. Two were local small town newspapers and two were less frequent publications from the Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory, Queensland and Torres Strait. The news media industry in Australia is dominated by a few large corporations; most notable are Rupert Murdoch News which publishes *The Australian*, the Fairfax Group which has *The Age* of Melbourne and *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the Kerry Packer Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd. Other major dailies include *The Courier Mail* of Brisbane, *The Canberra Times*, *The Advertiser* of Adelaide and *The West Australian* of Perth.

Like many newspapers, space in the Australian press is dominated by political crises, tragedy, business, entertainment, sports and advertising. However, there is also a fairly continuous and extensive coverage of diverse educational issues. In the period of the study 295 articles on education were reviewed. The division by level was 102 on higher education (34.9 percent), 158 on private and public pre-K to12 (53.5 percent), and 35 on other education- related topics (11.8 percent). Leading topics encountered as measured by the number, length and frequency of articles were educational finance (7), high achievers (12), higher education (102), international education (22), literacy (9), private schooling costs (9), social effects of school opening and first year attendance (9), the teaching profession (25), technology adoption (14) and youth culture, development and problems (30).

In general, reporting reflected a wide range of concerns from school organization and administration to the social conditions affecting families and young people. School issues included topics like curriculum changes, bilingual education, dyslexia, bullying, dropouts, liability,

teacher strikes, financial costs, parent-teacher relations, innovative teaching, teacher shortages, violence in school and sexual misconduct by teachers. Concerns of parents were reflected in articles dealing with parent education, child development, family role, nutrition, day care programs, first year attendance, school opening, community relations, parent-teacher associations and reviews of children's literature. Considerable attention was also given to living conditions and perspectives of youth in articles about youth violence, student stress, drugs, homeless children and student viewpoints on school, youth culture and the problem of overload in senior secondary courses.

While there were wide variations in the standard of reporting, many articles reflected a high degree of corroboration of evidence and utilization of a wide range of sources reflecting viewpoints of educational professionals, government ministers, opposition spokespersons, school administrators, parents and students. Teachers and minority community representatives were, however, significantly underrepresented as sources of information and opinion. In some instances recent research findings related to topics were incorporated into articles.

Recent Trends In Australian Education.

A brief overview of some of the major issues and trends affecting Australian education in the last quarter of the 20th century provides a useful framework for this paper. Post-World War II liberalizing trends have created a dialectical conflict between advocates of the older traditional order and proponents of newer ideas. In terms of governance and power, traditional control of education by the state parliaments remains in place but the commonwealth or federal government has expanded its role via grants in aid and assumption of responsibility for special areas of education.

In the 1960's state aid to private education resumed after an 80 year suspension. This practice was opposed initially by one labor party but favored by another labor party. The resumption of state aid was promoted by the federal government through tax incentives and direct grants. The opposition labor party did, however, succeed in gaining a graduated system of aid based on school need rather than flat grants. Nevertheless, the policy remains highly controversial and divisive.

In primary education the tradition of the central state syllabus focusing primarily on basics with rote learning, regimented drill, little individual choice, harsh discipline and corporal punishment has yielded to a new climate with more school-based curricula modeled on central office guidelines, diverse teaching methods, group and individual activities, less formality, more freedom and less corporal punishments. This trend has resulted in an ongoing debate between traditionalists and reformers who each maintain the superiority of their own methods as preparation for life. Dual approaches are also found in ability streaming. Some primary schools 'stream' pupils whereas others maintain 'parallel' classes inclusive of all abilities.

The earlier tradition of secondary education involved rigid separation of academic high schools from vocational-technical schools. Today comprehensive coeducational high schools are the norm. However, gender segregation at this level still has advocates and a number of private schools exclusively enroll only boys or girls. The environment of secondary education has also been transformed by more diverse teaching methods, pupil-centered activities, school-based

syllabi, new cultural subjects like art and music and more extra-curricular activities.

Traditional assessment of achievement was based on two external exams resulting in an intermediate certificate at school age and a senior certificate two years later. Today the intermediate certificate has been abolished, and, while the higher school certificate (HSC) remains a critical determinant of qualification for college placement, there is a definite trend toward school-based and outcomes-based assessments.

Many new efforts are being made to address needs, hitherto neglected, in the education of minorities, recent immigrants, women and special needs students. An affirmative action plan was started in 1968 to provide funds and support to encourage the education of disadvantaged Aboriginal youth at the tertiery level. This was soon extended to the secondary level. Since 1988 a new policy has promoted the integration of Aboriginal children into regular primary and secondary schools and development of curricula to cultivate understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the many different groups of indigenous people. Efforts have also been made through bilingual education to preserve the understanding and use of traditional Aboriginal languages which are the key to cultural preservation.

In 1980 a survey found that one-fifth of all Australian school children came from non-English speaking backgrounds; the study identified 60 different language groups. This led to the development of a multicultural education policy which was based on trying to balance assimilation with pluralism. On the one hand, emphasis was given to English language instruction along with awareness of Australia's cultural diversity. On the other hand, migrant groups were encouraged to preserve their language and culture. This has led some groups to establish independent schools.

Recognition of sex discrimination and lack of equal educational opportunity for women and girls has led to creation of new personnel like anti-discrimination coordinators at the state level, legislation promoting equity, curriculum development to develop awareness of the social contributions of women and efforts to encourage women to enter non-traditional careers. These efforts appear to be succeeding as recent HSC results show a dominance of high scores by women. Finally, in the area of special education Australia is moving away from the older tradition of segregation with new policies emphasizing selective inclusion based on the criteria of manageability.

Issue: Private versus Public Education.

The controversy over public funding rose to a head in January following the announcement of another increase in private school fees, the second such increase in two years. The ensuing debate resulted in nine in-depth articles in national and local newspapers. These reports revealed many of the issues underlying this contested terrain. These include the social function and quality of private versus public education, the loss of funding for government schools, perceived inequity in the method used to appropriate funds between the two sectors and the question of whether compulsory fees are needed to support state-sponsered education. On a broader but related level a deep concern was expressed by some that differential access to education was fostering a class struggle which would undermine the ethos of equality in Australian national culture. For example, Mary Bluett, President of the Australian Education

Union in Victoria noted that elite private schools are "beyond the reach of the majority of Australians . . . the increase . . . highlights the growing gap within Australian society, a society that once prided itself on egalitarianism."[1]

After comparing the two year rise of 20 percent in private school fees with the 2 percent inflation rate an editorial in *The Australian* concluded that the "rapaciousness" of the "non-government sector threatens to derail efforts to encourage choice and higher standards in all schools".[2] The issue of all schools being threatened is an oblique reference to the funding mechanism by which the government appropriates monies to private and public schools from the education budget. The coalition government of John Howard instituted this new allocation method in 1997 which is known as the Enrollment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA); in this formula funds distributed to private schools are based on enrollment without any corresponding use of enrollment fluctuation for funding government schools. As a result when enrollments rise in independent schools their gain in funds results in a loss of funds for public schools even if their enrollments have also risen. For example, in 1999 the EBA is projected to shift $21.6 million in government funds from public to private schools as states payback $1700 to the federal government for every child who moves to an independent school.[3]

Resentment toward this finance system has intensified recently due to the rapid expansion of private education in Australia. On average private schools enroll 30 percent of all primary and secondary students; however, variations occur in each state ranging from a high of 35.7 percent in Canberra, the Capital territory, to a low of 22.23 percent in the Northern Territory. In 1997-98 nationwide school enrollments rose by 17,708 in private school versus 9,323 in public school. Moreover, since 1995 122 government schools have closed whereas 63 new private schools have opened; most of these have formed outside the Anglican and Catholic systems.[4] Recent escalation of fees for private schooling has been dramatic; in 1995 these fees were 12 times greater than the fees for government school but by 1999 the fee ratio had soared to 16:1. In Australia parents of public school children are subject to a voluntary fee system. The average annual tuition and fees for 1999 in U.S. dollars were $295 for a government school, $1301 for a Catholic school and $4914 for a private school. The range of private school fees varied from a high of $7425 for Sydney Grammar to a low of $1795 for St. Philips in Northern Territory.[5]

In addition to the extensive presentation of statistics outlined above, the press coverage of this issue presented a variety of critical perspectives along with assessments of causation. Sharon Burrow, President of the Australian Education Union, held that government subsidies were behind the rise in private school enrollment and concluded that " the fact that public school enrollments are going up but commonwealth funding is going down is outrageous and shows the ongoing discrimination against public school students led by David Kemp and the Howard government."[6] One reporter, who was concerned with parent perceptions that higher fees meant better education, investigated what private schools did with their funds; he found that much money was used for marketing and image promotion rather than educational improvements in technology, teacher salaries, teacher-student ratios and facilities.[7] Catherine Armitage, a social analyst, wrote a trenchant critique which asserted that "Australia has no educational policy", only "nine separate systems pursuing discreet and sometimes conflicting agendas." She further noted that the "public education systems are being asked to do more with less" and found that, between 1983 and the present, federal funding for private education had risen 190 percent versus just 28 percent for

government schools. Both labor and coalition governments share responsibility for this policy shift. The impact on government schools has been deterioration of infrastructure and rising class sizes which may be indirectly linked to the increased dropout rates and unemployment among youth from poor districts, rural areas and government schools. Armitage concludes that "Australia needs to ask itself whether we have abandoned the ideal of a free, comprehensive and universal system offering educational opportunites for all in favor of two unequal systems: a rich and varied one for those who can afford it, a poor one for the rest."[8]

The issue of funding inequity triggered a defensive and vitriolic debate about which system of education was superior. In December the head of the Victoria teachers' union conceded in one article that elite private schools offer more curriculum choice and smaller class size but saw no difference in teaching quality.[9] However, by early February the anger kindled by the funding issue in Adelaide erupted in an attack by the union leadership which asserted that parents sending children to private schools were wasting their money on inferior education. Union president for South Australia, Janet Giles, stated that public schools were superior in "literacy, special needs support and vocational education" and were " the best option for children providing quality education equal to or better than the private system at a fraction of the cost."[10] Armitage also makes this point in her article and also reports that the per pupil expenditure in government secondary schools was 33 percent lower, $5876, versus $7580 in the independent sector. She further notes that underfunding has resulted in a widening gap between public and private schools in provision of computer- based classroom learning.[11] The press also featured the response of several independent school officials to these attacks. In South Australia Gary LeDuff denounced the Union position as "divisive, negative and insulting"; he charged that Giles had distorted the facts by failing to mention that only a fraction of the per pupil cost in private schools is derived from government funds and this grant is graduated according to each school's fee level. LeDuff defended private schools for their consistent quality, stable staff and provision of choice in education.[12]

Yet another issue which surfaced in the press in the wake of the funding controversy was the question of whether government school fees should remain voluntary or become compulsory. Viewpoints on this issue were skewed and intensified by the perception that the Howard government was committed to a policy of reduction in direct funding of education. A survey of parent's attitudes toward fees by the Australian Scholarships Friendly Society gained press coverage which revealed many of the concerns surrounding this issue. Two thirds of parents with children in public, private and Catholic schools favored compulsory school fees for all so long as those without means were exempt. They reasoned that the decline in government school funding made this necessary to preserve the quality of education. The society's director, Terry O'Connell, reflected concern that "there's a growing gap in education . . . and we are moving very quickly towards . . . a situation of educational have's and have nots."[13] As a solution he proposed an Educard which would provide basic entitlements for all but with extras requiring payment by users. However, this solution was opposed by Ms. Burrow of the Australian Education Union who warned that compulsory fees would sanction "the underfunding of the public school system" and suggested that "Australia has to have a debate about whether or not education is so important that it should be an essential public service."[14] Kim Carr, the opposition spokesperson for education, added that the survey revealed that government education was underresourced.

The idea of means-tested compulsory government school fees drew further criticism from Bev Baker, president of the New South Wales Federation of Parents and Citizens Association. She denounced the idea of compulsory fees as forced taxation and dismissed the means test as a denial of the social responsibility to educate all kids. Like Ms. Burrow, Baker objected to compulsory fees because they transfer "the cost of educating our young from society to the individual parent" and asserted that "public education must be free to all irrespective of wealth."[15] Duncan McInness, who heads the New South Wales Parent Council made up of independent school parents, concurred with Baker that government school fees should remain voluntary.[16]

The funding conflict was given fairly extensive press coverage. Reporting revealed all sides of the issue, however, more voice was given to those who oppose or differ with government policy. The only editorial on the issue, which appeared in *The Australian*, was decidedly critical of the private school sector for inflating school costs and jeopardizing the goals of more choice and higher standards in education. It is interesting that there was no mention of similar conflicts in other democracies such as the U.S. where vouchers which would function like the EBA are hotly contested. It seems from the tenor of this conflict that Australia is undergoing a social transition in which divergent cultural ideals are in collision. Egalitarian strands in Australian culture may reflect the formation of a national identity based on rejection of the rigid class structure found in England. On the other hand, past and present economic forces and overt racism have maintained the reality of class distinction based on wealth as well as ethno-racial identity. What is at issue is whether the public should tolerate state subsidization of this class formation through education. In this case the political opposition, teachers' unions, many parents groups and reporters seem to be saying that privatization which weakens the educational opportunities of the majority is not acceptable.

Issue: Pre-K and Primary Education.

Reports on early childhood and primary education focused mainly on pre-school conditions with lesser attention given to some innovative programs and critical perspectives. The context underlying the concern with pre-K education was an emergent national problem with literacy levels of young adult school leavers and recognition of the importance of early years for school readiness. The lead article reported the findings of an Australian Education Union report, *Toward A National Plan for Pre-School Education*, which concluded that early childhood programs were uncoordinated, underresourced and neglected. Although 70 percent of Australian 4 year olds go to pre-school, the numbers vary widely from 93.8 percent in South Australia to 31.7 percent in New South Wales. Moreover, children most likely to miss out on Pre-K are those who are the disadvantaged. The report outlined the benefits of early childhood education which included language learning, a boost in cognitive, emotional and social development , and detection and remediation of learning difficulties. It recommended reforms to create a national system of free and compulsory Pre-K education.[17]

Several follow-up articles highlighted some of the problems currently affecting pre-school education and reinforced the thrust of the Union report. For example, one report cited the findings of a government study, *100 Children Go To School*, which discovered that primary schools fail to make effective use of literacy skills brought by students from home and pre-school

experiences. The report advised that primary teachers should incorporate the cultural differences, background and knowledge of children into their lesson work.[18] Other evidence supporting the need for more pre-school education came out in a Sydney paper which reported that 1 in 7 Australian children entered first grade with a speech or language disorder causing problems with reading or spelling.[19] Finally, a report from New South Wales noted that 80 percent of kids who do not attend pre-school are disadvantaged in future learning with 76 percent of these progressing at below the average class rate.[20]

More depth and different perspectives on the pre-school issue occurred in an article by Nadia Jamal which explored the relationship between day care and pre-school, parent viewpoints and existing head start programs for high risk kids. Jamal begins by asking the question whether it is good for 4 year olds to learn more and play less? This reflects on the traditional difference between day care and pre-school which is the context for the Union campaign for compulsory pre-school with more focus on literacy and numeracy. Her report includes some child care experts who do not recommend intensive academic work; they favor a non-compulsory pre-school system with focus on concepts needed to learn basics rather than extensive activities in reading and writing. Long day care has grown in popularity in Australia as economics increases the number of working parents. Nevertheless, the main thrust of Jamal's article seems to reinforce the case for boosting pre-school as a valuable program for all kids. She highlights the positive points by using one mother's thoughts about her 4-year-old's pre-school experience:

> preschool . . . gives children an opportunity to experiment with different activities - everything from finger knitting to singing Aboriginal songs. It is a very broad program which encourages the children's imagination . . . It has built her confidence so I think in that way she is more prepared for school.[21]

Jamal also mentions *Literacy and Numeracy at Transition*, a project designed to break the cycle of failure by encouraging Pre-K and K level reading and writing concept development in at-risk kids from non-English speaking homes in New South Wales. Finally, the case for early intervention is strengthened by comments from university scholars reporting not only the strong association between school failure and weak basic skills but also the need for more intervention in the first two years of life when so much brain development takes place.

Curriculum innovations were featured in four articles reflecting some of the divergent perspectives about primary school curriculum. In Tasmania the Spaulding Method, a reading program developed in the 1950's which uses traditional row desks, teacher direction, discipline, structured drill and a back-to-basics approach, was used with success to reverse the low literacy performance of lower SES kids.[22] On the other hand, new outcomes-based syllabi in health, physical education and science were reported in Queensland which enabled classes or individuals to move through the levels at their own pace. These new curricula were developed through collaboration between the State Curriculum Council and Catholic, independent and government schools.[23] The new emphasis on group activity and techology was highlighted by reports on two internet-based projects. One article on the *Schools Web Challenge*, a competition involving school teams in the design of community-based home pages for the Web included a revealing endorsement by the Prime Minister. Howard expressed his hope that the project would cultivate the skill and energy "to keep Australia at the leading edge of information technology . . . to achieve further success in the global marketplace."[24] The other project engaged Australian

students with other students around the world in an interactive project with a team of scientists exploring the Amazon rainforests.[25]

Two articles reporting critical perspectives on contemporary education reveal the tensions between tradition and school reform along with the contrast between the older homogeneous Australia and the new multicultural society. In Queensland, Ian Mackie, president of the teachers' union, challenged an earlier article's claim that education could be improved by spending less and outlawing teachers' unions. Mackie discounted the article's use of "overseas economic rationalist research" from the U.S. as flawed and absurd; in rebuttal he praised government schools for innovative teaching, diverse curriculum, attention to individual learning needs and enrollment of all ability levels.[26] Exposure of the national literacy problem led one frustrated reader, C.A. Yates, to ask " How can a child go through school and yet turn out illiterate?" He then suggested that all the causes could be traced to changes in family, school and society. These factors included broken homes, breakdown of discipline, disruptions of lessons by unruly students and the neglect and underfunding of special needs students. Yates then concluded "the level of illiteracy in this country is a reflection of our new multicultural society and our ineffective education system."[27]

The press coverage of Pre-K and primary education reflects some of the political tensions embedded in the structure of Australian government. A confederation with a weak federal system and strong state autonomy may often result in considerable interstate variation in services and the absence of effective national planning. However, Australia appears to be moving gradually toward a stronger national central government which reinforces the expectation that a national pre-school plan should be possible. The press coverage appears to favor such a plan. Many articles on this issue are informing the public about facts of the issue and of the need for reform while also applying pressure on the government to recognize that pre-school education is connected to future literacy goals. The coverage of curriculum innovations is objective and open-minded about the pragmatics of blending older and newer methods. The press is also quite effective in providing an open forum for debate and exchange of critical ideas about the causes and effects of changes in education and society and also about solutions for some of the problems confronting schools.

Issue: Secondary Education.

Press coverage of secondary education encompassed articles dealing with the teaching profession, curriculum alternatives and change, characteristics of effective schools, and issues and problems affecting school life. Aspects of teachers' work making the news included a national shortage of secondary math teachers, wage disputes and negotiations, inservice education and private tutorial services. In the coverage of the math teaching crisis it was reported that only 76 percent of math teaching positions were filled by qualified applicants in 1999 with many math graduates opting for higher salaries in technology fields. In an interview the president of the Association of Math Teachers spoke of efforts to make math teaching more attractive to graduates, these measures involved trying to reverse the image of math as a rote learning subject, encouraging students to enjoy the challenge of mathematical reasoning and revising curriculum to link math problems with practical applications. This trend toward applied math was noted as a

worldwide development. Another international linkage made in the article came from Glenda Lappan, a visiting lecturer and the head of the U.S. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics who reported that the same crisis in the U.S. has led to the use of incentives like bonus pay. In the same vein Australia was reported to be considering to pay math graduates to train for teaching.[28]

A more general nationwide teacher shortage was reported by a Queensland newspaper which projected that only 50 percent of all secondary positions would find qualified applicants by the year 2000 with a "blowout" then likely in teacher-pupil ratios. The causes were identified as a glut of teacher retirements and new teacher education requirements that require non-education graduates to do two years rather than one year to earn a postgraduate teaching degree.[29] In South Australia rural areas were reported to be facing shortages of foreign language, math, science and technology teachers due to the low numbers of graduates in these fields.[30]

The Australian press run frequent articles about high achieving students and top scorers on the HSC Certificate are often the subject of feature articles. By contrast there are rarely, if ever, articles about programs for learning disabled students. One exception was an article about a young man who repeatedly failed in school after school but later achieved such success in a technology program that he was rated to be a genius. The tradition of recognizing brilliant students in the news is a reflection of an alternative track of highly selective high schools within the state system. In 1998 in New South Wales 16,000 students took an exam to qualify for 3,000 places in these schools. One such school, James Ruse Agricultural High School in a Sydney suburb accepted 120 of these students, just 10 percent of those who selected the school as their first choice. A feature article identified some of the characteristics of this school which annually produces 15 percent of the top HSC scores in Australia. Interviews with staff and students cited the system of shared learning, peer mentoring, supportive competition, celebration of achievement, an "us against the world clannishness", dedicated hard working teachers, strong parent support and participation in school life, highly motivated students and a climate of respect between students and teachers.[31]

Another feature story on a newly built state high school in Queensland focused on what the curriculum and facilities would look like in a 21st century school. The article first noted a transition to new methods, curriculum innovation and relevance of subjects: "students won't chant their times table or conjugate their verbs; they'll ponder on heritage interpretation, environmental drama and rainforest studies." The interior design and technology resources represented yet another break with the immediate past: "instead of sitting in regimented desk rows, they will wander between state of the art computer cabled and satellite-linked offices, most of which have instant access to libraries across the world via the internet." In addition the report noted that the building achieves a high standard of environmental integration by collecting rainwater for irrigation of school gardens and using a mountain spring for its supply of drinking water.[32]

Many issues involving student life and outcomes of schooling were reported in newspaper articles. Most of these involved problems such as bullying, drug use, enforcement of dress codes, enrollment of foreign students, gender integration, student stress and violence in school. An article on bullying, in which it was revealed that 54 percent of year 8 students experience verbal or physical intimidation at school, found a consensus among leaders of a school parents federation,

school councils and teachers union on the need for more resources to employ support staff like counselors and social workers. One parent noted that teachers have enough to do as it is besides having to act as dispute resolution persons. The Department of Education, however, denied that there was any linkage between school funding levels and the problem. Nevertheless, the article closed with an expert's assessment which reemphasized the need for action: "schools and teachers have a huge responsibility to make sure kids grow up and learn conflict resolution and anger management . . . but we don't actually model them in society."[33]

Another article in the Sydney press found a political issue in the government's delayed release of a report on student drug use. The report surveyed 5,000 high school students from 143 schools in New South Wales. Sources privy to the data were cited as saying that the study revealed rapid growth in alcohol, drug and tobacco usage. The article went on to suggest that the incumbent state government planned to withhold the survey results until after the election in March due to potential fallout from its 70 percent reduction of funds allocated to an anti-smoking health education program.[34]

A Queensland newspaper report explored a variety of viewpoints surrounding a political dispute over proposed legislation to tighten up provisions for enforcement of the dress code. The issue arose in 1998 when a state ombudsman ruled that a student could not be punished for not wearing the uniform. The state opposition education spokesman then introduced a bill in Parliament to empower principals to enforce the code. However, the education minister opposed this bill as "heavy handed and unnecessary" and offered an alternative reflecting school-based management: "what we need is an administered procedure . . to allow the schools to be arbiters of their own policies." The head of the principals association reported that school administrators were eager for legislation to resolve the issue; however, the teachers' union head asked for consultation with all concerned groups before passage of any law.[35]

A major national political controversy affecting education arose in January when the Prime Minister, John Howard, announced that his government planned to reduce welfare benefits to unemployed youth who fail to pass literacy and numeracy tests. In 1998 the government began a program to provide such training for job seekers at 69 centers around the country. Nevertheless, the outrage provoked by the new policy was quickly reflected in press coverage. The Democrats' deputy leader called it a "heartless" policy and suggested that, while resources were needed for training, it was pointless to pull the rug out from under people at the same time. A Labor spokesman felt that "the real issue is whether the Howard government is prepared to put its money where its mouth is rather than simply blaming the young unemployed." One youth worker predicted that the policy would only deepen the alienation of the young unemployed who would "rather take a chance on a life of crime than be dictated to by the bureaucracy in such a brutal manner." The head of the Ethnic Communities Council of Australia felt that the plan would discriminate against non-English speakers. The national coordinator of socialist youth groups predicted that the policy will cement an underclass amongst youth and definitely force more people onto the street."[36] In South Australia one education professor interpreted the government's new literacy policy as an effort to shift the blame for unemployment caused by its own policies which fail to create new jobs and produce illiteracy by underfunding education; he called for more job training programs.[37]

Press coverage of secondary education is oriented toward investigative reporting with a

sharper eye for political conflicts over policy. There is also more focus on problems encountered in school and on efforts to resolve these. Innovations are of particular interest. Once again the tenor of most articles and the weight of evidence presented suggests that the press tends to give more voice to opposition perspectives, particularly in cases of controversial government policies. The coverage of issues is quite broad and reflects considerable sensitivity for getting inside the world of schools.

Issue: Assessment and Education.

Three issues related to educational outcomes and their assessment received prominent press coverage during the study. One story, which involved the process by which program changes were made in HSC courses, revealed the political sensitivities surrounding curriculum revisions. In this case, the government proposed to reduce the weight of many courses from 3 to 2 units, reduce the overall number of courses, add new courses in visual arts and rewrite courses in key subjects. The opposition, however, voiced concern about "dumbing down" the HSC and promised to review all new course if successful at the polls in March. An official of the Secondary Principals Council, however, expressed concern that a delay could derail all the changes.[38] The article in a Sydney paper provided no input from the teachers' union on this issue.

Another issue attracting attention was the nationwide trend of girls outperforming boys on year 12 exams and dominating the honors lists of the HSC. In 1999, for example, 4389 girls vs. 3301 boys made the NSW honors list. Various explanations were advanced for this development. A *Weekend Australian* reporter asked whether a "culture of defeat" had stymied boys. The head of the Australian Secondary School Association held that boys' disincentive to achieve was a result of a peer culture attitude that "it's not cool to do well." On the other hand, one scholar felt that "girls do well because they are better at conforming to rules."[39] A school principal in Western Australia noted that "boys often felt awkward and inferior next to female counterparts, who were often more literate, had better interpersonal skills and were more self-confident," he also reported that boys have the highest suspension rates, are most likely to die in a car accident and are most prone to suicide.[40]

Several authorities interviewed provided ideas to resolve the gender gap problem. The Queensland Minister of Education noted that "the educational system is dysfunctional if it delivers differential outcomes for boys and girls."[41] A female social scientist proposed the need to "get rid of the culture of masculinity that being smart is not good," and recommended that ways be found to encourage boys to take school more seriously. She also downplayed the seriousness of the problem by noting that year 12 exam results don't translate into lifetime failure or success.[42] A school principal proposed gender segregation in classes, more involvement of fathers in school, multimedia methods and interactive teaching as means to boost male achievement and interest in education.[43]

A final issue in assessment involved an independent survey which revealed that 63.5% of Australian employers felt that secondary schools were ineffective in preparing students for the world of work. Employers stated that students lacked skills of self-appraisal and self-presentation reflecting neglect of English and communication skills. However, the survey was criticized by the South Australian Minister of Education for distorting reality and creating a negative image of

youth, he also mentioned job partnership and work experience programs which connected education with industry.[44]

Reporting of assessment issues showed more variation in quality. Only the articles on gender achievement ratios employed depth reporting and wide sources. In other cases, the data were sparely presented and not enough details were given about either curriculum changes or the industry survey for clarification of the respective issues. The impression given to the reader on HSC changes seemed to favor the government's position with the opposition being given a more disruptive image. Likewise, in the article on industry views of schooling the critical perspective of business is given more weight and the defensive posture of the Minister of Education suggests he was caught off-guard. It is surprising, however, that the reporter did not make a connection between the industry survey and the Howard government's focus on a literacy crisis.

Issue: Minority Education

The leading press stories in minority education concerned the Howard government's announced cuts in Abstudy funding, the termination of support for bilingual education for Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory, the need for curriculum revisions and some critical perspectives on national policy for minorities. Abstudy was introduced in 1968 to provide study grants and other support for Aboriginal students to attend universities; in 1972 the Labor government proclaimed that "the greatest area of our neglect has been in secondary education of the Aboriginal people" and extended Abstudy to aid secondary students. By all reports, Abstudy was highly successful; in 1972 less than 10 indigenous students went to university but by 1998 8000 Aboriginals were enrolled in higher education. Nonetheless, they still have not achieved equality with the majority population in pass rates, retention and enrollment in postgraduate study. The program cost is 2% of total education expenditures. If approved by Parliament the government proposes to have Abstudy criteria and funding conform to the national Youth Allowance Program and to make grants to institutions rather than individuals. None of the reports indicated that the government made any prior consultation with the Aboriginal community about the changes; this shows the persistence of earlier traditions of settler colonialism in dictating terms of life to indigenous people.

It would be an understatement to say that the press had a field day with the Abstudy recission issue. The nature and process of this political move revealed the tenuous and precarious nature of Australia's gradual transition into a more pluralistic and multicultural country. One reporter speculated that the government reduction of Abstudy was intended to assuage antagonisms of the isolated rural white population toward special treatment for Aborigines; he also opined that the government should have created a Bushstudy program for whites who are underresourced instead of treating Abstudy as a "plaything of white politics."[45] In one article in the *Australian* government critics labeled the 'reforms' "an assimilationist move aimed at undermining black aspirations." The chair of theCouncil for Aboriginal Reconciliation warned of the effects of the policy: "Education is the foundation for economic independence and once you restrict access and participation you ultimately disempower these groups." The President of the National Union of Students called the abolition of Abstudy "an act of treachery not national reconciliation." The opposition spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs condemned the move as one

sure to create more dropouts and fewer university graduates.[46]

In defending the cuts the Minister of Education reasoned that "all Australian students are entitled to *equal* educational opportunities."[47] However, one university director of indigenous studies noted that when unequals are treated as equals the effect is to maintain the status quo. In defense of affirmative action she concluded "we can never--and should never--forget the continuing impact of the past 200 years . . . Abstudy is an investment in the future social well-being and employment of Aboriginal Australians--without this we will never achieve 'reconciliation' nor can we expect to achieve educational equality."[48]

Another issue provoking widespread anger among indigenous people and others concerned for the preservation of Aboriginal culture was the Northern Territory's decision to phase out bilingual education programs. In a national press article, the Education Minister defended the decision because of low literacy levels but indicated that indigenous languages would still be taught using E.S.L. methods.[49] However, the local Aboriginal press reported that the Aboriginal Constitutional Convention denounced the new policy as "denial of our right to education. An attack on Aboriginal cultures, and a retrograde step in providing equitable educational services;" the assembly said that Aboriginals had demanded more and better English instruction, *not* the end of bilingual education. Some communities said they planned to withdraw children from schools in protest.[50] Reports of this communication breakdown on policy appear in both the Aboriginal and mainstream press. Moreover, an in-depth feature story on the linguistic status of indigenous languages and the language-learning problems of Aboriginal children appeared in the national *Australian* magazine. This article also outlined the dilemmas of cultural preservation policy when language itself is dynamic and transformational. For example, many Aboriginal people are multilingual; some speak their group's original language if that has not already died out; in addition they speak Kriol, a hybrid pidgin lingua franca, and also Aboriginal English which is distinct from mainstream English. Kriol is a street language which Australian Aboriginal linguists compare to Black English or Ebonics in the United States. However, unlike Ebonics, they see no place for Kriol in school; Joyce Hudson notes "you don't need to teach kids Kriol because they can already speak it . . . we're talking about acknowledging that Kriol is there, encouraging the kids to be proud of it, but teaching them English." Part of the Aboriginal communities' discontent stems from the fact that the government spends 10 times more on migrant language programs than on indigenous languages.[51] The sense conveyed by most of these articles is a frustration at the inconsistency of government policies tempered by a realization that the problem is truly complex. As one reader wrote *The Australian* editor

> It is puzzling . . . [to see the government] stop funding education in Aboriginal languages. How will the abysmal standard of Aboriginal education improve if the students are taught in a language they do not know?[52]

Over 200 years, Australia's policies toward Aboriginal people have run the gamut from extermination to exclusion to assimilation and to integration, all of these have failed to produce a constructive educational result. Since the 1980's a new commitment has been made to develop a multicultural society based on respect for diversity along with encouragement of cultural preservation. The strength of debate over cuts in Abstudy and elimination of bilingual education reveal that this policy remains a contested terrain, because it is politically divisive the policy is still vulnerable

In this climate an open discourse continues to search for new social foundations that will enable constructive dialogue on educational goals. Margaret Valadian, an Aboriginal educator, maintains that Australian education must provide more of the caring and compassionate values that will "bind us together as a community."[53] In an Australia Day address in Canberra, Governor-General William Deane reflected on the changes in his lifetime and praised the emergence of multiculturalism:

> I am often conscious . . . of the racial and religious intolerance which was so common . . . in the 1930's and 1940's . . . I am convinced that it is our multiculturalism which has made possible our national unity . . . We do owe the original Australians . . . a debt . . . and we need to work . . . to achieve greater co-operation, greater harmony and a greater common understanding.[54]

A slightly different perspective with less emphasis on integration and more focus on pluralism and cultural autonomy is offered by Colin Power, an Australian official with UNESCO:

> Australia once had a melting pot model of education which meant that . . . we learned . . . our British heritage. If the One Nation Party in Australia had its way, our curriculum and classrooms would once again be dominated by one culture, its language, literature, history and religion. It would be a closed, unequal, nationalistic society which discriminates against minority cultures--the very type of society that the founders of UNESCO were determined to prevent rising again.[55]

Issue: International Education

The Australian press focused on three major areas which fall in the sphere of international education. These include the exchange of ideas about education, the effects of international competition on education, and offshore growth in tertiary education. Australia appears to rely mainly on the United Kingdom and the United States as sources for ideas in education. For example, during this study several reports and editorials explored Australian reactions to the United States author Judith Rich Harris' book *The Nurture Assumption* which deals with the role of collective forces of socialization as opposed to parental influence on the child.[56] Two contrasting reports from the United Kingdom dealt with curriculum innovation and the problem of sexual relations between teachers and students. The first article highlighted British research which found learning gains occurred when teachers used historic period films in association with books to teach units on the past; note was also made of the British government's plan to offer free screenings of *Shakespeare in Love* for schools.[57] The other article reported on a situation which led to demands for resignation of the British Chief Inspector of Schools for his indiscretion in publicly commenting that sex between teachers and 6th form students can be "educative."[58] This story came just two weeks after a series of articles in Australian newspapers covered an ongoing crisis over widespread sex inquiries and their negative impact on the role of teachers in Australia.[59] Some Australian teachers also connect with new ideas through affiliation with international educational organizations. One of these, the World Education Fellowship, held its biennial conference in Tasmania, which was extensively reported by the local press in Launceston. Here educators heard lectures and research papers by scholars from 17 countries; themes included education for human rights, multicultural integration, peace and environmental preservation.[60]

Australian consciousness of the effects of international competition on their educational system is reflected in several articles. Issues in these reports include the loss of full-fee paying undergraduates to British universities, the brain drain of Australian professors, other professionals and technology experts due to wage differentials in the United States and elsewhere, effects of regional Asian economic changes on fee-paying international students attending Australian universities, and the loss of K-12 teachers to better paying overseas employment.[61] The press accurately portrays the emerging global marketing climate of higher education and suggests that the government needs to boost wages to retain talent. Australian efforts to attract fee-paying students from British and European markets are also noted.[62] There is also attention given to the positive effects of new associations between Australian and international students. For example, in 1998 the first ever survey of local students' views of foreign students was conducted at the University of New South Wales; the press reported that students felt the new contacts forced them to question their own perspectives and cultural bias and exposed them to new ideas and insights.[63] A related interest shown in the involvement of Australian students in international competition; for example, a Wollongong University team which made the finals in a computer programming competition with Canada, the United States and Taiwan made the national news.[64]

The third topic meriting press coverage is development of offshore programs and campuses by Australian universities. Articles in this area included plans by Curtin University to open an overseas campus in Sarawak, Malaysia; efforts by Central Queensland University to obtain international certification for courses from GATE, the Global Alliance for Transnational Education; and the development of multinational inter-university consortiums to share programs, resources, research and students.[65]

Press coverage of international education issues reveals the intersection of national development and global relationships. Historically, Australia was relatively isolated both by its geographic location and by its colonial status. In our world there is a clear recognition that economic well-being depends on global interrelationships. Press coverage of education's emerging international focus reflects this recognition within the context of Australia's national well-being and growth.

Conclusion

Australian news media are the principal source of public information about trends and developments in the country's educational system. Reporting covers a wide range of issues affecting all levels of education. Frequency and quantity of articles increases with the level of education; the greatest depth of coverage is accorded to higher education which periodically is allocated an entire section in *The Australian*. In general articles dealing with controversial issues and topics use a wide array of sources including government officials, opposition party spokespersons, professors, heads of organizations, school administrators and, to a lesser extent, some rank and file individuals such as parents, students and teachers. In many cases the press appears to function as a sounding board for those who are challenging government policy in areas of contested terrain. This is particularly true in situations where new policies have been proposed and are yet to face consideration by Parliaments or when old policies have come under attack or are subject to review. In this role the press may increase public awareness about these issues and

contributes to the cultivation of an informed citizenry at times of election. Evidence for this consists of letters to the editor expounding viewpoints on issues and also instances of grassroots organization in response to adverse news. An example of this was the protest by Northern Territory Aboriginal parents against the government's decision to terminate bilingual education which included a threat to withdraw children from schools.

Most educational issues are approached as local or national concerns with reliance on internal sources, data and viewpoints in reaching decisions. In a few rare exceptions references were made to external educational practices; these cases generally reflected clear parallels with the Australian situation and served to either amplify or clarify the arguments being advanced about the national or internal issue in question. For example, the issue of whether to continue to teach indigenous languages elicited a comparison with the ebonics debate in the U.S.; however, in this case the Australian analyst maintained that Kriol, the local equivalent of Black English or street language, should never be taught in school because students already had fluency. In effect Kriol is not a true indigenous language but a hybrid. In Australia there is more concern for saving the original group languages which are fast disappearing than promoting instruction in Kriol which is a growing lingua franca in certain outback districts.

Educational developments in England and the U.S. are most frequently cited as models with potential relevance for Australia. However, there is also an increasing concern and interest with educational developments and needs in the Asian Pacific Rim region, particularly in English-speaking areas such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore which supply many students to Australian secondary schools and universities. The growth of internationalization in higher education is well covered by the Australian press; in large part this reflects a concern with the country's status and future in the age of rapid global economic development as well as a recognition of the key role played by tertiery education in fostering effective international connections which may pay future dividends.

The focus and climate of opinion in much of the coverage of internal educational issues appears to favor continuation of policies which move in the direction of more democratic, global, liberal and multicultural development. For example, the only editorial about education encountered in this study was staunchly opposed to the elitism reflected by the rising cost and fees of private education which was interpreted as restricting the educational choices and freedom of many Australians. Moreover, no newspaper provided any space for opinions or viewpoints of leaders of the One Nation party which is opposed to the trend toward multicultural pluralism and favors a regression to the older Anglo-centric axis of Australian national culture. Nevertheless, this party's platform can be understood by inference in several articles featuring a defense of multiculturalism by mainstream Australian leaders of white and Aboriginal backgrounds. In this respect the position taken by the press mirrors the social transitions underway in Australia which, like the U.S., has become a more richly textured and culturally diversified country in the last half of the 20th century. Unlike the U.S., Australia has committed itself to a national mission of soul-searching about its shameful historic record of expropriation and genocide against the Aboriginal people. This is currently manifest in efforts to legislate and maintain economic, political and social policies which will lay a foundation for reconciliation.

During the period of this study this liberalizing policy direction appeared to be jeopardized by new initiatives from federal and state-level governments. These included elimination of

bilingual education, abolition of a successful affirmative action program for educationally underserved indigenous people, diversion of additional funds to more exclusive private schools and failure to adequately fund the necessary expansion and improvement of public education. The press reaction to these policy shifts is by no means uniform. On the one hand, the rising private school fees provoke the strongest response along the lines of defending an egalitarian ethos as the core of Australian national identity. The articles dealing with the under-resourcing of public education are also unsympathetic to the government's posture and give much publicity to the negative effects of weak funding on school's effectiveness. However, the proposals to diminish the support given to Aboriginal education receive more balanced treatment with each side having an equal opportunity to air its position and arguments. In most of these cases the pattern of reporting provides a forum for the contending viewpoints and then provides as much qualitative data as possible that is relevant to understanding the issue.

In its educational reporting the Australian press acts to maintain the democratic tradition of open access to information, public debate of policy, freedom of expression and the right to oppose government policy and advocate for change. This stewardship role helps citizens to keep informed about the workings of the schools and alerts them to the direction and future effect of policy changes. In this capacity the press is a functional part of the polity. The news media also plays an investigative role in cases involving government abuse of power, policy debates and other conflicts where new information is critical to an understanding of the problem. In summation this study found the press to be an active and effective force in expanding public knowledge about education and in fostering perspectives that are consistent with the ideas of equal opportunity and national growth through education.

Appendix A. Newspapers Consulted.

The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)
The Age (Melbourne, Victoria)
Albany Advertiser (Western Australia)
The Australian
The Avon Valley Advocate (Western Australia)
The Cairns Post (Queensland)
Centralian Advocate (Alice Springs, Northern Territory)
The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland)
The Examiner (Launceston, Tasmania)
Herald Sun (Melbourne, Victoria)
The Koori Mail (Lismore, New South Wales)
Land Rights News (Alice Springs, Northern Territory)
Narrogin Observer (Western Australia)
The Sun-Herald (Sydney, New South Wales)
Sunday Herald-Sun (Melbourne, Victoria)
Sunday Mail (Adelaide, South Australia)
Sunday Times (Canberra, ACT)
The Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)
The Weekend Australian
The West Australian (Perth, Western Australia)

Endnotes

1. Quoted in "Class Struggle as Private Fees Set To Soar," *The Australian*, 30 December 1998, 1,4.

2. Ibid., 12.

3. Cited by Madeleine Coorey, "Private Schools Grow in Favor," *The Australian*, 27 January 1999, 6.

4. Stephanie Raethal, "Private Schools Keep Growing," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1999, 3; See also Coorey, "Private Schools . . .," 6.

5. See "Cost of School Set To Rise," *The Australian*, 25 January 1999, 18; also "Class Struggle . . . . .," 1,4.

6. Quoted in Michelle Hele, "Private Schools Booming," *The Courier Mail*, 27 January 1999, 9.

7. Christopher Bantick, "What Price The Old School Tie," *The Australian*, 18 January, 1999, 13.

8. Catherine Armitage, "Inequities Flourish Under Our Fragmented Education Policy," *The Australian*, 10 February 1999, 13.

9. "Class Struggle . . .," 1,4.

10. Quoted in Michael Owen, "Private Schools Inferior," *Sunday Mail*, 7 February 1999, 17.

11. Armitage, 13.

12. Quoted in Owen, 17.

13. Madeleine Coorey, "Parents Back New School Fees," *The Australian*, 25 January 1999, 2.

14. Ibid.

15. Quoted in Nadia Jamal, "Revealed: the High Cost of Educating Our Children," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1999, 1.

16. Ibid.

17. Madeleine Coorey, "National System Needed To Sort Out Pre-School Mess," *The Australian*, 13 January 1999, 3.

18. Madeleine Coorey, "Pre-School Class Forgettable Lesson," *The Australian*, 28 January 1999, 2.

19. "School Nightmare," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1999, 5.

20. Anna Patty, "Why Rachel's Ready For School," *The Sun Herald*, 2 January 1999.

21. Quoted in Nadia Jamal, "Playing the Learning Game : Should Four Year Olds Be Required To Learn More and Play Less," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1999, 10.

22. Madeleine Coorey, "Fast Track to Reading : A Literacy Program Being Tried in Tasmania Is Turning Disruptive Students into Classroom Angels," *The Australian*, 25 January 1999, 18.

23. Malcolm Cole, "Syllabuses On Course for Top Marks," *The Courier Mail*, 26 January 1999, 4.

24. "Schools' Web Challenge Begins!," *The Weekend Australian*, 6-7 February 1999, 3.

25. Bronwyn Hurrell, "Students To Join Amazon Explorers Via Satellite," *The Advertiser*, 4 February 1999, 24.

26. Ian Mackie, "Innovative and Diverse Teaching In State Schools," *The Cairns Post*, 29 January 1999, 9.

27. C.A. Yates (letter), "Family Breakdown Blow To Literacy," *Sunday Mail*, 7 February 1999, 54.

28. Amanda Hodge, "Low Pay and IT Options = No Teachers," *The Australian*, 13 January 1999, 5.

29. Malcolm Cole, "Teacher Drought Looming," *The Courier Mail*, 27 January 1999, 1,9.

30. Scott Monk, "Schools Facing Shortage of Specialist Staff," *The Advertiser*, 27 January 1999, 11.

31. Catherine Armitage, "Brightest and Best," *The Weekend Australian*, 23-24 January 1999, 25.

32. Michael Madigan, "School Ready For 21st Century," *The Courier Mail*, 26 January 1999, 4.

33. Meaghan Shaw, "Bullying; Schools In Help Call," *The Age*, 14 January 1999, 7.

34. Julie Robotham, "Facts On Student Drug Use Withheld," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 January 1999, 3.

35. Malcolm Cole, "Plan For Strict Uniform Code," *The Courier Mail*, 28 January 1999, 1.

36. "Literacy Part of Dole Conditions," *The Cairns Post*, 29 January 1999, 2.

37. Alan Reid, "Shifting The Blame," *The Advertiser*, 4 February 1999, 19.

38. Stephanie Raethel, "Opposition Vows To delay HSC Changes," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1999, 2.

39. Madeleine Coorey, "Girls Win Honours, Boys Wear Dunce Cap," *The Weekend Australian*, 9-10 January 1999, 5.

40. Keryn Ashworth, "Boys In Class of Their Own," *The West Australian*, 15 February 1999, 1,2.

41. Dean Wells (Letter), "Girls Just As Important As Boys," *The Weekend Australian*, 16-17 January 1999, 16.

42. Coorey, "Girls Win . . .", 5.

43. Ashworth, 1,2.

44. Margot Denney, "Schools Fail Test : Industry," *The Weekend Australian*, 13-14 February 1999, 33.

45. Gavin Moodie, "Black Students Pay For Unkindest Cuts," *The Australian*, 20 January 1999, 37.

46. Guy Healy, "Blacks Attack Reform," *The Australian*, 20 January 1999, 32.

47. Ibid.

48. Wendy Brabham (letter), "Abstudy Treachery," *Koori Mail*, 13 January 1999, 6.

49. Cited in Maria Ceresa, "War of Words : Speaking Up For A Culture," *The Australian*, 16 February 1999, 1.

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52. John Bond (letter), "Learning Curve," *The Australian*, 18 January 1999, 12.

53. Cited in Ian Pattie, " Education Fails Teenagers Because It 'Does Not Promote A Caring Society'," *The Examiner*, 5 January 1999, 8.

54. Elizabeth Meryment, "Deane Praises Tolerant Youth," *The Courier Mail*, 27 January 1999, 4.

55. Quoted in Ian Pattie, "Education Seen As Weapon For Good," *The Examiner*, 31 December 1998, 10.

56. See Jane Fraser, "Perfectionist Parents Are Spoiling the Child," *The Australian*, 13 January 1999, 11; Tracey Bretag, "Danger in Taking Peer Group Pressure Too Far," *The Australian*, 13

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January 1999, 11; Penny Oakes, "Ever Changing Role Models," *The Australian*, 14 January 1999, 8.

57. "Period Films Boost Literacy Among Kids," *The Courier Mail*, 25 January 1999, 3.

58. "Schools Chief In Sex Row," *The Advertiser*, 8 February 1999, 22.

59. See Amanda Phelan, "Teachers Live In Terror Over Sex Inquiries," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1999, 2 ; also Amanda Phelan, "Under Suspicion : Why Teachers Live In Fear," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1999, 10.

60. Ian Pattie, "Human Rights On The Road," *The Examiner*, 30 December 1998, 6; "Education Seen As Weapon For Good" and "Forum Brings Nations Together," *The Examiner*, 31 December 1998, 10; "Professor Explores All Ways of Learning," *The Examiner*, 1 January 1999, 8; and Martin Stevenson, "Call For Spread of Ecological Thinking," *The Examiner*, 4 January 1999, 6.

61. Guy Healy, "UK Unis Hunt Full Fee Payers" and "Fund Wages or Lose Brains," *The Australian*, 20 January 1999, 31; "Asian Crisis Could Cause $360 Million Loss," *The Australian*, 3 February 1999, 38; Jane Symons and Catherine Lambert, "Brits Woo Our Nurses," *Sunday Herald Sun*, 10 January 1999, 27; Gary Barker, "Brain Drain Crisis in Australia's IT World," *The Age*, 14 January 1999, 1; Scott Monk, "Asian Enrollment Up Despite Crisis," *The Advertiser*, 3 February 1999, 13.

62. Healy, "UK Unis . . ." and "Fund Wages . . .", 31.

63. Ron Sutton, "When Students Hedge Their Bets," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1999, 10.

64. Jenifer Foreshew, "Student Team In Limbo Finals," *The Australian*, 26 January 1999, 35.

65. Luke McIlveen and Jane Richardson, "Curtin Sets Sights on Sarawak Idyll," *The Australian*, 3 February 1999, 37; Dorothy Illing, "CQU Pursues Global Recognition," *The Australian*, 3 February 1999, 39; Mathew Spencer and Colin Espiner, "Alliances Key To Education Multinational," *The Australian*, 3 February 1999, 48.